DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 187 413 JC 800 370

AUTHOR Pugh, Gabriela Alicia Pisano
TITLE Through the Open Door: Quality and Equality of Education for Language Differentiated Students.
PUB DATE 80
NOTE 6p.
JOURNAL CIT Chabot College Journal: v4 n1 p8-12 Win-Spr 1980

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; *Academic Standards; Ancillary School Services; Bilingual Education; College Role; *Community Colleges; *Equal Education; *Hispanic Americans; Multicultural Education; Non English Speaking; Nontraditional Students; *Open Enrollment; Two Year Colleges

ABSTRACT

As community colleges extend the educational franchise to increasing numbers of non-traditional students, educators face the dilemma of reconciling demands for academic quality with equal educational opportunity. Among these non-traditional students are Hispanic-Americans, one of the fastest growing populations in the country, who experience an inordinate high school dropout rate (64%) and who are underrepresented in higher education. To assure them equal educational opportunity, community colleges must seek methods of not only attracting and retaining Hispanic students, but also of providing an education that promotes the success of the Hispanic student and upholds the academic standards of the institution. Of various approaches that have been tried to achieve this goal, bilingual/bicultural programs have met the greatest success. The California community colleges, for example, offer 43 programs or courses in bilingual/bicultural areas, and students can work toward 31 bilingual/bicultural degrees. When combined with bilingual support services, these programs have resulted in a higher success rate for Hispanic students than programs using traditional, English-language instruction, proving that bilingual/bicultural education is a powerful tool in closing the gap between quality and equality. (The paper provides a suggested reading list of items dealing with open access and Hispanic students.) (JP)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

Through The Open Door:
QUALITY AND EQUALITY OF EDUCATION FOR LANGUAGE DIFFERENTIATED STUDENTS

by Gabriela Alicia Pisano Pugh

In an earlier article (Spring, 1978) Dr. Pugh looked at what Chabot College is doing to respond to the need for bilingual educational opportunity in the community college today. Here, she stresses another dimension of this approach —the importance of bilingual instruction as a means of equalizing access to college-level learning for students who come from other language backgrounds.

A dilemma of the 1980's is how to reconcile *quality* and *equality* of education, especially at the community college, for an increasing population of "new" students, among them the language differentiated. The access ("open door") model gives them the right to a college education; the quality of that education is at stake and we, as educators, must address the problem of delivering it seriously.

Overview

Patricia Cross (1976) articulates the problem when she compares this challenge to the structure of an onion:

> *Peel away the layer representing the problems of access, and we reveal a fresh layer of concerns about how higher education should deal with the learning needs of the new clientele. This new layer of challenges is increasingly exposed precisely because of the recent breakthroughs made in the access layer.*

In the past higher education has retained quality of academic standards through selectivity of student enrollments, widely used both as a measure of quality in research studies and in predicting student outcomes (Astin and Solomon, 1979, p. 50), and by a variety of applications, to maintain standards of instruction at all levels. As Cross notes, however, the open access model now becomes a real threat to the retention of academic quality, since selectivity is no longer a viable means of assuring learning readiness in the classroom.

A question then becomes: how do we retain academic standards in a college system which has an "open door policy," particularly as this relates to the language differentiated student—the learner who may be either limited or virtually non-English speaking when he or she enrolls. This article will not answer that question entirely, but it will discuss the conditions which have contributed to its emergence as a major concern of educators throughout the community college system, and suggest an avenue by which to address the problem.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Donald Mayo

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

The Community College

The community college, extending the educational franchise to all Americans over eighteen, regardless of station or origin in life, is a unique institution. These colleges are comprehensive in their response to the needs of the American public, and in the way they relate to their communities. They did not just "happen" overnight, however. The process is described by a broadly respected leader in the community college field.

Now 75 years old, the community college was an institution whose time came somewhat slowly. Not until the post war educational boom period did this type of egalitarian idea take hold in the ranks of education of the United States. It carried the land grant and state university idea a big step further by opening the doors to all newcomers, regardless of scholastic standing or economic means, and by providing a variety of programs to meet the needs of the 'new' students that it so quickly attracted. More than anything else, the revitalized community college stood for access to educational opportunity (Gleazer, 1976, P. 2)

Community colleges with little or no tuition charges and with broadly diversified instructional programs are community-based in their mission. Gleazer notes that (a) the community college serves as a "broker" in seeing to it that identified post-secondary educational needs are met either through its services or other appropriate institutions; (b) community facilities and resources are used in the institution's programs; e.g., churches, industrial plants, and others; (c) the students attending these colleges are a cross-section of the community served; (d) the college is in fact a community center, pulling the community together; (e) college programs are performance-based (people are expected to move into and out of the institution as they have needs and opportunities), and (f) finally, target populations of the community colleges include a large number of people not previously found in post-secondary education, including, for example, people who have been unable to continue beyond high school, the hard core unemployed, women, ethnic minorities and others.[1]

The Hispanics

Among these "others," are the Hispanics, who are the most rapidly growing minority population in the nation. As of July 1, 1974, in California, for example, the total population had risen to just under twenty-one million, with Hispanics reaching 3.2. million in round figures, and Blacks 1.5 million.[2] This is an increase, among Hispanics, of 18 percent as contrasted with 10 percent increase of Black population.[3] The point: Hispanics were, until recently a rather unnoticed compo-

[1]This description has been extracted from "Transcend Boundaries," a position paper by Edmund J. Gleazer, Jr., for the National Colloquium on the Foreign Student in the U.S. Community/ Junior Colleges, 1976.

[2]A study by the Mexican American Population Commission in 1971 says the Mexican American is the largest minoirty group in any state (2.9 million in California in that year, as contrasted with 2.1 million Blacks in New Yor, the state with the largest population of Blacks in the nation).

[3]In some locations, the Hispanic population has grown even more dramatically. Los Angeles, for example, shows 19 percent of its elementary school enrollments as Spanish-surnamed in 1966. Nine years later the figure was 30 percent or more than a 50 percent increase over the decade (Racial and Ethnic Survey 1975, p. 62).

nent of American society.[4] Yet today, "nearly one out of 20 persons in the U.S. is not of Spanish-speaking origin...." (Ovando, 1977, p. 230).

Rapid growth of this population is expected to continue in the future because Hispanics, in addition to constant immigration, have a very young demographic structure. An example of this structure is the fact that the median age (20.9) is eight years less than the national one (28.9), and nearly twice as many Hispanics as Americans in general are under age five (13 percent versus 7 percent).[5]

In California, the State Department of Finance, in response to a request from this writer,[6] has estimated that for 1980 the Hispanic count is approximately four million (overall population in the state is 20 million).

Thirty-Six Percent

Hispanics fare poorly in education when compared with Whites or Blacks. Only 36 percent of the total population twenty-five years of age or over has completed high school as compared with 67.0 percent of Whites and 45.5 percent of Blacks, accoring to *U.S. News and World Report* (1978, p. 58).

And they are "everywhere." Hispanics make up nearly 13 percent of the population in the thirteen Western States. But they represent fewer than 8 percent of the undergraduates and only 4 percent of the graduates at institutions of higher education, according to a report released by WICHE in 1979.

The problem of the community college then, in regard to Hispanics and others for whom English is a second language, becomes not only one of attracting and retaining them, but also of providing an education that will both encourage their success, and hold to the academic standards of the institution over all.

Of course academic standards, as one authority indicates (Gardner, 1928, p. 447) are defined within the context of institutional purposes. Where Hispanics and others of limited or non-English speaking backgrounds are concerned, this means that the philosophy and instructional style of the institution must be directly tailored to relate to such a learning population, a task which isn't easy. Typically, educators in these institutions find that they must set academic standards within such a framework, and then, like acrobats, "dance" on a tightrope between the historic mainstream elitism of the college/university tradition ("quality") and the very real needs and demands of the Community ("equality")—a task inherent in the character of the public community college.

In walking the tightrope, community colleges have adopted special approaches to instruction in order to maintain quality of instruction while serving

[4]For our purposes, Hispanic here refers to persons living in the U.S. of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central American, South American or Spanish birth or ancestry.

[5]As reported by the U.S. Bureau of Census, Current Population Reports, "Persons of Spanish Origin in the U.S.", March 1976, p.1.

[6]Information based on a memorandum to Robert Gnaizda from the Department of Finance, Population Research Unit. Note also that the figures given in this statement include only those Hispanics who are known to be legal residents of the state. Figures shown elsewhere suggest that there may be thousands more who are not officially counted and who do not appear in any published census statistics.

the bilinguals. The major thrust of this area has been to offer bilingual/bicultural[7] educational programs.

Nationwide

In a recent study conducted by this author, a review of the literature revealed that institutions offering bilingual/bicultural offerings around the country included Eugenio Maria de Hostas Community College and the Bronx Community College in New York; East Los Angeles College, California; Miami Dade Community College, Florida, and El Paso Community College in Texas. Others include Canada Community College in Redwood City, California; The Community College of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Sauk Valley College, Illinois.

California is one of the best places to find examples of types of programs and/or courses being undertaken in the area of bilingual/bicultural education. Among 108 community colleges in the statewide system, 43 offer courses or programs in bilingual and/or bicultural areas, and 31 offer bilingual/bicultural degrees.[8]

Such programs work, and are changing the statistics on retention and learning achievement for non- and limited-English speakers. The success rate of these students, for example, among the Hispanics, is higher than for Hispanics collegewide (e.g., 20 versus 14 percent). Reasons for this are many, among them native-tongue support services in addition to bilingual instruction. Such services typicaly include, for example, tutorial, career and counseling assistance, and the use of language laboratories.

The bilingual instruction approach, of course, is the major reason for this success rate, a factor which supports the contention that it is pedogogically sound to provide access to learning for the individual in a language he or she understands. In this writer's survey of colleges offering bilingual instructional opportunity, it was interesting to note that the "other primary language" (e.g., Spanish) was used as the classroom language for slightly more than half the time in most individual courses (52 percent), and for almost half the time (40 percent) within overall programs.

It is good to see this happening. Certainly the need to serve the educational requirements of linguistic and ethnic minorities,[9] and the growing number of these people create definite challenges in the maintenance of academic standards and overall quality of education, while expanding the reach of the educational programs overall.

As a community college educator, my primary concern is to provide the best education for the greatest number of persons, including the non- and limited-English speaker, while maintaining both *quality* and *equality* in what we do. Bi-

[7]That instruction which is aimed at making a student sensitive to cultural and behavioral aspects of two cultures and competent to function in two languages in the world of work. In the context of a curricular model, it is that one which presents subject matter in a language other than English at least 50 percent of the time.

[8]Information gathered by this author through a survey conducted in cooperation with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. Eighty-eight colleges participated in the survey.

[9]All 50 states have assumed education as a constitutional function; there can be little doubt that providing equal education for language-differentiated minority students is a concern of national scope.

lingual/bicultural education seems to be working as an approach toward closing the distance between these seemingly opposite poles. In other words, bilingual/bicultural educational opportunity can become, for minority-differentiated students, a synonym for opportunity and quality in higher education.

Suggested Additional Reading

Astin, Alexander W. And Solomon, Lewis C. "Measuring Academic Quality: An Interim Report." *Change.* Vol. 11, No. 6, September 1979.

Cross, Patricia K. "Beyond Education for All Toward Education for Each," *The College Board Review,* No. 99, Spring 1976.

Gardner, David P. "Educational Standards, a Moving Target," *Vital Speeches.* Vol. 94, No. 14, May 1978.

Gleazer, Edmund, Jr. "Positioning the Community College," *The College Board Review,* No. 99, Spring 1976.

Ovando, Carlos J. "School Implications of the Latino Invasion." Phi Delta Kappan, December 1977.

U.S. News and World Report, "Hispanics Push for Bigger Role in Washington," May 22, 1978.

Western Interstate Commisssion for Higher Education (WICHE) Reports, "Hispanics Most Unrepresented in Enrollment Today," Vol. 24, No. 3, November 1979.

□

JUL 18 1980

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE FOR JUNIOR COLLEGES

96 POWELL LIBRARY BUILDING

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90024

EE 36